

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE****Patent and Trademark Office**

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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.
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097655-064 05/05/00 SHANNON

3 122-1-1718-A

QMG2/U209

EXAMINER

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HUNTER, A

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3711

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DATE MAILED:

02/09/01

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	09/655,054	SHANNON, JOHN L.
	Examiner	Art Unit
	Alvin A Hunter	3711

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136 (a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 05 September 2000.

2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-19 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 1-19 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) Claims _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are objected to by the Examiner.

11) The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) approved b) disapproved.

12) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

13) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a) All b) Some * c) None of:

1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

14) Acknowledgement is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e).

Attachment(s)

15) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)

16) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)

17) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 2.

18) Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____

19) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)

20) Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1, 2, 5-8, and 10-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Wheeler (USPN 4830382).

Wheeler discloses a volleyball support system (10) with tubular, or hollow, telescoping parts (12, 14) connected together and a locking mechanism (48), which is operated by hand, that holds the system in the raised and collapsed position (See Column 5, lines 26 through 51, for the components and functionality of the locking mechanism). With the eye (72) attached at the top of the system, one of the telescoping members would be extended out of the other in the collapsed position. Wheeler also discloses that the system can be stored in a carrying bag (See Column 5, lines 9 through 25). If used for tennis, the system's height can easily be modified to accommodate regulation tennis nets and a player's bag.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wheeler (USPN 4830382) in view of Smith, Jr. (USPN 4440393).

Wheeler discloses the above but lacks the top of the system having a notch for engaging the top of the tennis net. Smith, Jr. discloses a slot (120), or notch, that engages with the tennis net (See Figure 4).

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have a notch in the top portion of the system in order to elevate the tennis net to its proper height.

Claim 4 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wheeler (USPN 4830382) in view of Smith, Jr. (USPN 4440393) in further view of Robi (USPN 5326109).

Wheeler in view of Smith, Jr. discloses the above but lacks an enlarged foot on the base. Robi discloses a base (14), or enlarged foot, attachable to his system that can easily be used on the base of the applicant's invention.

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have an enlarged foot attached to a base in order to balance the invention upright between the ground and tennis net.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claim 9 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, set forth in this Office action and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Alvin A Hunter whose telephone number is 703-306-5693. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday from 7:30AM to 4:30PM Eastern Time.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jeanette Chapman, can be reached on (703) 308-1310. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-308-7768.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-1148.



JEANETTE CHAPMAN
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 3700